

Operation Pedro Pan is the largest organized exodus of unaccompanied minors in the Western Hemisphere to this day. On its 60th anniversary, I want to highlight the significant contributions that many of those who arrived because of Operation Pedro Pan have made. I know firsthand the American dream many of the exiles achieved because I immigrated to this country with my family when I was a young boy. In just one generation, my family went from Cuba to Congress. I believe with all my heart and soul that in no other country in the world is that achievement possible.

HONORING DOUG AND JOAN
BRUNELL AS IOWAN OF THE WEEK

HON. CYNTHIA AXNE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 20, 2021

Mrs. AXNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring Pastor Doug and Joan Brunell, owners of Uptown Brick & Bell Café in Creston, Iowa, as our Iowans of the Week.

Last year, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pastor Doug and his wife, Joan, were driving through some Iowa towns and couldn't help but notice the number of boarded up churches that they were seeing. They saw one in Creston, Iowa, just a few blocks from downtown, and Pastor Doug was interested. When they were able to get a full tour of the property, Pastor Doug was touched. This church needed a purpose, and the folks in Creston were the perfect fit to fill that purpose.

On the Fourth of July, 2021, Pastor Doug and Joan opened the Uptown Brick & Bell Café in the basement of the old church. They started with a coffee and espresso machine, while also serving various assortments of ice cream. With the café being in the basement of the old church, there is plenty of space for customers and community members to meet for coffee or ice cream.

The basement consists of a large main room, filled with tables, chairs, and even bean bags for customers to enjoy and relax. At the front of the room, you'll see the main counter where customers can order their favorite coffee or espresso drinks or try out the different flavors and styles of ice cream. The space even has an attached kitchen, which has come in handy lately as Pastor Doug and Joan have been expanding the menu of what they are offering their customers. Not only can you stop by for a pick-me-up or a sweet treat, but folks can also stop by for bagels and sandwiches if they are looking for a quick bite.

The café also serves the Creston community in other ways. The main sanctuary of the old church is still as functional and beautiful as ever, and it is rented out for services every Sunday. Pastor Doug and Joan also plan to host other community events and organizations, such as CAT (Creston Area Theatre), Iowa Realty Association meetings, arts and craft sessions, and even auctions, among other events.

In a matter of just a few months, Pastor Doug and Joan were able to bring the old church back to life, cultivating an infectious sense of community, togetherness, and support. It's folks like Pastor Doug and Joan who make communities more connected and make

towns like Creston a better place to live. Madam Speaker, because of Pastor Doug and Joan's dedication to faith, service, and community, I am so honored to recognize them as this week's Iowans of the Week.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MADISON CAWTHORN

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 20, 2021

Mr. CAWTHORN. Madam Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 449.

HONORING MARY JO PASEK FOR
HER SERVICE TO BAKERSFIELD
COLLEGE AND THE KERN COUN-
TY COMMUNITY

HON. KEVIN MCCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 20, 2021

Mr. MCCARTHY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mary Jo Pasek, a talented and service-oriented community leader who has dedicated herself to improving the work of countless students and the Kern County community throughout her career, on her retirement from Bakersfield College.

Mary Jo arrived in Bakersfield, California by way of Minnesota—following her graduation from the College of St. Scholastica—and worked in the booming Kern County oil and natural gas industry before joining Calcot Limited, a cotton grower and marketing cooperative, where she would work for over 25 years. In a testament to her leadership skills and drive, Mary Jo went on to become the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources at Calcot. While in this role, Mary Jo oversaw the employee benefits program, developed a computer literacy program for the Calcot workforce, and managed the Calcot-Seitz Foundation Scholarship Program, which awards annual scholarships to promising students pursuing careers in agriculture.

Following her passion for helping students succeed, Mary Jo began a new chapter in her career in 2007 when she joined Bakersfield College—part of the Kern Community College District (KCCD)—and its team of devoted educators, who have committed themselves to advancing the KCCD's mission of creating life-long learners. In her role as the Community Relations, Scheduling, and Events Manager at Bakersfield College, Mary Jo oversaw a number of departments, including the Human Resources and Event Management divisions. She enhanced personnel training and professional development programs, developed relationships between the school and broader community, and raised needed funds for the Bakersfield College Foundation and Athletic Department—positioning Bakersfield College to continue to offer quality programming for students and faculty for years to come.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of participating in many of the events that Mary Jo coordinated at Bakersfield College. From hosting my office and the Library of Congress on Bakersfield College's campus to conduct

Veterans History Project interviews to playing an integral role in the highly successful 2014 Kern Agriculture Summit that I joined to discuss important issues facing Central Valley farmers, Mary Jo has always been uniquely capable of bringing together diverse stakeholders with the shared goal of bettering and giving back to the Kern County community.

In addition to serving others through her work at Bakersfield College, Mary Jo has extensive volunteer experience, having worked on behalf of Kern County veterans and several community groups, including the Bakersfield Breakfast Rotary, United Way of Kern County, and the American Cancer Society. She has received well-earned recognition for her accomplishments over the years, including the District Rotary Rotarian of the Year, Bakersfield Breakfast Rotary Volunteer of the Year, and Bernice Harrel Chipman Bakersfield Woman of the Year awards for her tireless work.

While Mary Jo will no longer be with Bakersfield College, I am confident she will continue to be a strong role model for others and an enthusiastic leader in the community. On behalf of the 23rd Congressional District of California, I wish Mary Jo and her husband, Tom, all the best as they enter this new chapter in their lives.

HONORING NOELLE RHODES SCOTT
FOR 21 YEARS OF SERVICE WITH
THE CABARRUS ARTS COUNCIL

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 20, 2021

Mr. HUDSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Noelle Rhodes Scott for over 21 years of exemplary service with the Cabarrus Arts Council. I have seen Mrs. Rhodes Scott's leadership firsthand and know how much she means to our community.

Mrs. Rhodes Scott began her esteemed career after graduating magna cum laude from Wake Forest University. Following internships with the Arts and Science Council in Charlotte and the North Carolina Arts Council, she was selected at the Associate Director, and later Interim Director, of the High Point Arts Council. She went on to become a National Endowment for the Arts Fellow and then joined the Arts Council of Fairfax County after her research was complete.

A giant among her peers in the art community, Mrs. Rhodes Scott has long been a fierce advocate for the arts and education. Since becoming President and CEO of the Cabarrus Arts Council in 2000, she has transformed the formerly volunteer organization into the pre-eminent arts council in North Carolina.

During her tenure with the Cabarrus Arts Council, Mrs. Rhodes Scott oversaw the development of the Davis Theatre and Galleries and launched Students Take Part In The Arts, one of North Carolina's largest art-in-education programs. Each year, the Davis Theatre draws over 16,000 visitors to our community and the education program presents performances to over 39,000 children in Cabarrus County Schools and Kannapolis City Schools. The Cabarrus Arts Council also distributes annual grants of over \$50,000 to support creative projects and artists.

Mrs. Rhodes Scott has led by example over the years and has made immeasurable contributions to our community. Cabarrus County